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Weekly news for nonprofit news leaders and supporters

When a secret database is tipped to the right journalists, nationwide police reform happens.



This is one of the posts mentioned in the "In Plain View" series from Injustice Watch and BuzzFeed News. The posts contain violent, racist and sexist language from law enforcement officials across the country. Photo provided by series co-reporter Emily

The project was so secretive that [Injustice Watch](#) Executive Editor [Rick Tulsy](#) flew from Chicago to Philadelphia to see it firsthand.

Philadelphia lawyer [Emily Baker-White](#) was building a database of troubling Facebook posts by law enforcement officials in eight cities. She worried that if word leaked the posts would be deleted. Fellow lawyers had suggested she reach out to Tulsy. They knew and trusted him because they had been sources for the Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist during his days as a reporter for The Philadelphia Inquirer.

Tulsy quickly determined that the racist and violent posts captured by Baker-White should be brought to light. “I looked at three images,” Tulsy said. “I was sold.”

But it would take a lot of reporting to examine the broader questions of where, why and how often such offensive posts were occurring and how they might affect trust in police. When Tulsy and project co-author [Emily Hoerner](#) started writing, they weren’t sure what reaction their stories would get. Police had been caught making offensive social media posts in the past and defenders cited a need for those in a stressful job to have free-speech rights to share personal opinions with some expectation of privacy.

Injustice Watch spent a year studying the posts of officers in Philadelphia, the largest of the eight cities. Hoerner investigated the large number of civil rights complaints against officers with posts and how many of those posting were in leadership roles.

When Injustice Watch co-published the “[In Plain View](#)” [series](#) with BuzzFeed News in June, it exploded online.

“I’ve been a reporter for 40 years,” Tulsy said. “I’ve done some big projects — but I’ve never done anything that remotely had the impact that this did.”

Reporting from the series or the stories themselves appeared in over 600 outlets across the nation, including USA Today, CBS News, The New York Times and The Washington Post. Police chiefs called to verify information, doing their due diligence before taking action. Tulsy, Hoerner and Baker-White continue to hear from journalists from across the U.S. asking how they can replicate the reporting in their own towns.

In Philadelphia alone, the department took action to fire 13 officers, and seven officers whose posts were flagged resigned. In Phoenix, more than 70 officers were disciplined for their social media posts. Prosecutors undertook reviews to determine if the posts would compromise the police as credible witnesses. Amid such concerns, the reporting is having continuing impact on

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Tulsky and Hoerner think the project helped other nonprofit investigative outlets develop stories about the activities of public figures on Facebook. ProPublica found a secret Facebook group for [Border Patrol agents](#) and Reveal reported on [cops in extremist Facebook groups](#).

“We do our work to expose problems,” Tulsky said. “On our best days, we get to see reform happened over time. What we saw here is reforms that happen instantaneously.”

This is the second in a series taking you behind the scenes of stories selected by the Institute for Nonprofit News for INN’s [Best of Nonprofit News 2019](#) because of their high impact. Statewide reporting takes time and money but builds trust between journalists and the public. This news matters! And without your financial support, stories like this go untold. If you would like to support this kind of high-quality reporting, please donate to [Injustice Watch](#) or [similar newsrooms in your area](#). From now until Dec. 31, your gift will be doubled by [NewsMatch](#). And a gift to [INN](#) will help us nurture and support these newsrooms year-around. All money raised will contribute to journalism that creates change, informs communities and holds those in power accountable.

New and notable from INN

Introducing the Dorothy Kunes Cross Fund



To honor Dorothy Cross, the mother of INN executive director Sue Cross who recently passed away, INN has created the Dorothy Kunes Cross Fund. Dorothy Cross was an artist and community journalist who wrote, took photos and helped produce the local Royalton Recorder newspaper in North Royalton, Ohio. She encouraged her daughter to pursue a journalism career.

If you choose to [donate](#) (and please do!), your gift will send more than 25 women this coming year to skill-building, leadership training and other opportunities that help them advance and succeed in leadership of public service newsrooms across the country.

A new INN collaboration examines Chicago's new mayor

As Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot marks the first six months of her tenure, a group of seven local news organizations is launching a project to examine the Lightfoot administration's progress toward its stated goals.

The participating newsrooms are INN members Better Government Association, Block Club Chicago, Chalkbeat Chicago and The Chicago Reporter, as well as partners The Daily Line, La

Reminder: INN's Services portal is a go-to source

The [INN Services portal](#) can help you find high-quality providers that save you time and money. From content distribution to legal resources, check out INN Services to see what deals have been made, often negotiated specifically for INN members. The offerings are always changing, so if you haven't browsed the portal recently, take another look.

Opportunities & resources

Apply

- The Solutions Journalism Network is launching the Local Newsroom Revenue Project, which will help newsrooms do high-quality, solutions journalism stories to raise revenue. Ten newsrooms will receive small grants (up to a total of \$10,000) to support solutions journalism projects and experiments. [Apply](#) by **Nov. 30**.
- The Columbia J-School is offering [three fellowships](#) for local news executives interested in the Sulzberger Executive Leadership Program. The fellowships cover full tuition and fees. Three Gordon Gray Jr. fellowships are available to media executives and managers from US news organizations that focus on covering news in one geographic region in the United States, more than national or international stories. Additionally, four Maria Moors Cabot Endowment Fellowships are available to media executives and managers working in newsrooms in Latin America and the Caribbean. Apply by Monday, **Dec. 2**.
- The National Press Foundation is offering a four-day training program for 20 journalists that will look at all facets of heart health and heart disease: who is at risk, symptoms, preventive care, treatment, demographics, data, and the latest science and medicine. The training will be held Jan. 26 - Jan. 29 in West Palm Beach, Florida. This program is open to U.S.-based journalists only. [Deadline to apply](#) is **Dec. 6**.
- The [Women in Journalism Workshop](#), May 1 to May 3 at the Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute at the University of Missouri, is an annual workshop that focuses on challenges, accomplishments and issues specific to women in the journalism industry today. Apply by **Dec. 15**.

Attend

- There are numerous project management products out there to help your organization manage big and small projects. Trying to figure out which one is right for you? Join INN for an [informal demo and discussion of workflow tools](#) among INN members on **Dec. 5**.

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- Center for Civic Design has [best practices](#) for sites that distribute information on elections.
- Better Government Association created an [Illinois Public Pensions Database](#), collecting data from the largest public pension systems in the state.
- The Center for Public Integrity, USA Today and the Arizona Republic worked together to develop a tracking tool that identifies the hidden hand of special interest groups and lobbyists in writing laws across all 50 states of America. The [model legislation tracker](#) is now publicly available. [Email](#) for questions.
- WHYY's Billy Penn compiled a [list of resources](#) for media professionals to use in their reporting on gun violence, which grew during the [Better Gun Violence Reporting Summit](#).

Learn

- From [City Bureau and Reveal](#), how to create evaluation systems in newsroom that grow journalists, not just track page views.
- Local news organizations are facing a daunting financial future. In this era of waning trust and financial support, what are the prospects for sustaining this fundamental democratic institution? [Register](#) for a **Dec. 5** webinar, during which the findings from the latest John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and Gallup news [studies](#) will be discussed.

Have an opportunity to share with INN members? Email news@inn.org.

In Case You Missed It

- Emily Ramshaw and Amanda Zamora will leave their leadership roles at Texas Tribune at the end of the year to launch a national nonprofit news organization aimed at giving women the facts, tools and information they need to be equal participants in democracy and civic life. [Texas Tribune](#)
- Google has increasingly interfered with search results much more than the company has admitted, a Wall Street Journal investigation has found. [Wall Street Journal](#)
- Thinking about journalism as a public good is vital for the future of news — and Congress needs to start considering what government action we can take. [PEN America](#)
- A study with Politifact showed that when journalists practice transparency around their processes, goals and values, news consumers tend to respond positively. [Trusting News](#)
- The Chicago Reader will pivot to a nonprofit model, to launch in 2020. [Nieman Lab](#)

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[Columbia Journalism Review](#)

- Report for America will support 14 new reporting positions with The Associated Press covering state legislatures in areas of highest need.

[Report for America](#)

From INN Members

A sampling of the best nonprofit journalism from INN members each week:

[The last of the climate deniers hold on](#)

Type Investigations / Vice

[Dozens of murdered women are missing from Puerto Rican police records, new report finds](#)

The Intercept

[American Climate](#)

InsideClimate News

[Do whistleblower protections work? Ask this one.](#)

The Retro Report

[Exposed: China's operating manuals for mass internment and arrest by algorithm](#)

International Consortium of Investigative Journalists

[Military families are getting sick from mold in their homes. Now they're suing](#)

Crosscut

Membership News

Celebrating member achievements — Congratulations:

To Graham Watson-Ringo, managing editor of **Rivard Report**, for being chosen in the inaugural cohort of The [Executive Program in News Innovation and Leadership](#) at the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism.

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Internet materials related to the Food and Foodways Web Archive.

To **Better Government Association** for their [Emmy Award](#) win and their top honor from the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences.

To **Scalawag** for its profile on building a magazine around [Southern identity](#) in Nieman Lab. (And to INN's Fran Scarlett for her shoutout!).

To **News Revenue Hub** and Report for America, a project of **The GroundTruth Project**, for their feature in Lensfest Institute's Solution Set [newsletter](#).

To **MinnPost** for being selected as a beta group participant for the [Branded Content Project](#).

Impact:

- A day after **ProPublica Illinois** reporting, [Illinois ended](#) isolated seclusion of children in schools across the state.
- An [Illinois senator](#) asked for assessment of toxic releases from a downstate hazardous waste incinerator plant, a site profiled in a recent **Better Government Association** story about President Trump's diminished EPA.

Do you have news to share or want to submit a profile of your nonprofit news organization? Tell us at news@inn.org.

Upcoming award deadlines

- Nov. 30: [Sidney Awards](#)
- Dec. 7: [Fellow of the Society](#)

To keep up with journalism awards, download INN's [Google Calendar](#) or view upcoming awards on [INN's calendar](#). If you know of an award not featured, help us out by submitting [here](#) or emailing awards@inn.org.

INN Events

- Dec. 5: [Demo: How INN Members are Using Project Management Tools](#)
- Dec. 11: [NewsMatch Webinar: Mid-Campaign Check-in/Bring Your Questions!](#)

Job Listings

[Director of Leadership and Talent Development](#)

INN

[Communications Director](#)

INN

[Higher Education Reporter](#)

Chalkbeat

[Assistant Editor, Video Strategy, MediaWise Multimedia Producer, MediaWise Editorial Director, MediaWise Multimedia Reporter](#)

Poynter

[Audience Engagement Fellowship](#)

Coda Story

[Associate Engagement Editor](#)

NPR

[Senior Producer, Where We Live Radio Show](#)

Connecticut Public Radio

[Senior Editor, Rainforest Journalism Fund - Amazon Regional Coordinator](#)

Pulitzer Center

[Media Literacy Training Coordinator](#)

PEN America

[Managing Editor & Social Media Director](#)

Covering Climate Now

[Audience Development Manager, Freelance Writers and Photographers](#)

The Beacon

[Investigative Reporter](#)

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[Learning Manager](#)

Online News Association

[Senior Technical Director](#)

News Revenue Hub

Have a job you want to promote? [Post it to our industry job board.](#)

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